

Questions and Answers for Consumers

The following information provides you with answers to frequently asked questions and should be used only as a guide and not considered to be a legal authority.



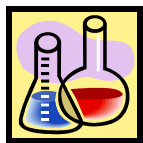
Who enforces the laws and regulations regarding petroleum products quality, advertising and labeling?

The Division of Measurement Standards and each County Office of Weights and Measures are jointly responsible for the enforcement of weights and measures laws and regulations in California.



How are the specifications for gasoline, diesel fuel, motor oil, gear oil, automatic transmission fluid, and engine coolants developed?

The State of California adopts by reference ASTM International and SAE International specifications for gasoline, diesel fuel, motor oil, gear oil, and engine coolants. Automatic transmission fluid standards are adopted from the automobile manufacturers' specifications.



How does the Petroleum Products Program sample and test gasoline and diesel fuel to determine if those products meet the quality specifications?

Samples of products are purchased from the marketplace openly by government officials or undercover. The samples are then taken to the Program's laboratory for testing.

Samples are tested using procedures developed by ASTM International. The following tests are performed on the listed products:

- Gasoline – octane number, distillation, water and sediment
- Diesel Fuel – cetane number, distillation, flash point, water and sediment
- Motor Oil – viscosity
- Automatic Transmission Fluid – viscosity
- Engine Coolant (antifreeze) – boiling point and freezing point
- Brake Fluid – boiling point



What does the Petroleum Products Program do when it finds products that do not meet the specifications?

After it is determined that the product does not meet specifications it is taken off sale and appropriate enforcement action is taken.



What methods does the Petroleum Products Program use to determine if the gasoline and diesel fuel dispensers are delivering the correct quantity?

Undercover vehicles are used and are equipped with special fuel tanks to determine if the correct quantity was dispensed.



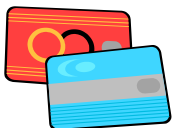
How does the Petroleum Products Program promote consumer confidence when purchasing petroleum and automotive products?

We randomly and constantly sample products in the marketplace for quality and quantity to ensure California drivers are using the highest quality products sold in the United States. We also respond to consumer complaints to prevent the sale of substandard products.



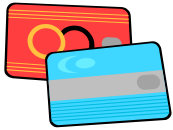
As a disabled driver, if I drive up to a self-service pump and the station attendant pumps my gasoline, am I entitled to get the gasoline at the self-serve price?

Yes. Because you are disabled, you are entitled to get the gasoline at the self-serve price.



Can a station add a surcharge fee for the use of a credit card?

No. They cannot charge a surcharge according to the California Civil Code Section 1748.1(a).



Can a station charge a transaction fee for the use of a debit card?

Yes. However, the fee needs to be posted at the card reader.



My owner's manual says the tank in my car only holds 16 gallons but I was able to put 17-1/2 gallons into it. What is wrong?

There may be nothing wrong, sometimes manufacturers change the size of the tank in a particular car and the owners manual is not updated. Check with the dealer. If you are sure the manual is correct there might be a problem with the gas pump. Contact your local sealer of weights and measures or download the [Complaint Form](#).



How many gas stations are in the State or a county?

The Division of Measurement Standards worked with the California Energy Commission to develop a database of the gas station locations in California. The database is available online at the Energy Commissions website located at www.energy.ca.gov/gasoline/gasoline_stations/index.html.



Why is the price of gasoline and diesel fuel in California so much higher than other states?

The State of California operates its own reformulated gasoline and diesel fuel program that has more stringent requirements than the Federally mandated program. This leads to a higher cost of producing the fuel. Additionally, the local sales tax is added on top of the 18.4 cents per gallon Federal excise tax and the 18.0 cents per gallon State excise tax.

For more information regarding gasoline prices, please visit the California Energy Commission's website at www.energy.ca.gov/gasoline/index.html.



I just filled up my vehicle with gasoline or diesel fuel and now it pings/does not run right/quit running or I do not think I got all the gasoline/diesel fuel I paid for. How do I file a complaint?

The Division of Measurement Standards is responsible for enforcing the State's minimum quality standards for gasoline and diesel fuel as well and accurate quantity being delivered. Customers who experience problems after purchasing fuel or who feel they did not get the full amount should contact one of the [Division of Measurement Standards' office locations](#) or call their county office of weights and measures. Also, the Division of Measurement Standards' [Weights and Measures Complaint Form](#) is available at our "Forms and Publications" site.



Does a higher octane gasoline make my car run better or increase its horsepower?

You should use the octane level fuel for your car that is recommended by the manufacturer. Purchasing a higher octane fuel than the engine was designed to run on will not make it perform better or increase its horsepower.



I was filling up at a gas station and noticed that one of my tires was low. I asked the station attendant if he could turn the equipment on and found the equipment to be broken. What do I do?

Posted on or near the equipment is the 1-800-356-7057 number where you may call to file a complaint or you may also submit a [Complaint Form](#) online to the Division of Measurement Standards.



I bought gasoline and wanted to use the air machine to fill up my tire. The machine said that I needed to insert 50 cents to start it. Isn't air and water supposed to be free?

Gas stations are required to provide air and water free to customers who buy gasoline or diesel. You may have to ask the attendant for a token or to turn the equipment on for you. If the attendant does not give you a token or does not turn the equipment on, posted on or near the equipment is the 1-800-356-7057 number where you may call to file a complaint. You may also submit a [Complaint Form](#) online to the Division of Measurement Standards.